



**TESTIMONY OF
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SUPERINTENDENT AND CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICER
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

BEFORE

**A HEARING OF THE
US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE**

ON

GOVERNMENT REFORM AND OVERSIGHT

FRIDAY, APRIL 28, 2006

THANK YOU VERY MUCH, CHAIRMAN DAVIS AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM. I AM CLIFFORD B. JANEY, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

I WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY TO APPEAR BEFORE THIS COMMITTEE TO TALK ABOUT THE PROGRESS MADE IN TURNING AROUND THE DISTRICT'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS HAS A DIVERSE STUDENT POPULATION OF APPROXIMATELY 58,000 STUDENTS WITH EQUALLY DIVERSE ACADEMIC NEEDS. TWELVE PERCENT OF OUR STUDENTS COME FROM FAMILIES THAT SPEAK MORE THAN 121 LANGUAGES AND REPRESENT 135 COUNTRIES. THEY RANGE FROM STUDENTS WHO REQUIRE SPECIAL AND REMEDIAL HELP TO ADVANCED LEARNERS WHO NEED PROGRESSIVE ACADEMIC CHALLENGES TO STAY MOTIVATED TO MOVE TO HIGHER LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT.

HOWEVER, THERE ARE CERTAIN KEY ELEMENTS THAT ALL THESE STUDENTS NEED TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN LIFE. THESE INCLUDE A FAMILY ENVIRONMENT WHERE THE STUDENT IS CONSTANTLY SUPPORTED, A SAFE AND HEALTHY CAMPUS ATMOSPHERE THAT IS CONDUCIVE TO LEARNING AND A HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHER WHO KNOWS WHAT AND HOW TO TEACH.

I TOOK A MAJOR STEP TO MAKING SUBSTANTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE CHANGES LAST YEAR WHEN I DEVELOPED THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR CHANGE, *THE DECLARATION OF EDUCATION*. SINCE THAT TIME, WE HAVE MADE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN CREATING A FOUNDATION FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS. WE HAVE

IMPLEMENTED NEW AND MORE RIGOROUS ACADEMIC STANDARDS IN READING/LANGUAGE ARTS AND MATH. WE HAVE RECENTLY APPROVED SCIENCE AND SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS FOR BOARD OF EDUCATION ADOPTION.

IT IS WORTH NOTING THE FOLLOWING INDICATORS OF OUR ACADEMIC PROGRESS OVER THE LAST YEAR:

- ✓ THE NUMBER OF SCHOOLS MEETING ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS (AYP) IN BOTH READING AND MATH HAS INCREASED DISTRICT WIDE, GOING FROM 63 SCHOOLS IN SCHOOL YEAR (SY) 2003-04 TO 72 SCHOOLS IN S& 2004-05. AT THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL, WE HAVE SEEN THE NUMBER OF SCHOOLS MEETING THESE TARGETS INCREASE FROM 55 TO 58 AND AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL FROM 8 TO 14.
- ✓ ATTENDANCE HAS ALREADY INCREASED, RISING FROM 85 TO 89 PERCENT DISTRICT WIDE.
- ✓ ADDITIONALLY, ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS DRAMATICALLY IMPROVED THEIR PROFICIENCY IN BOTH READING AND MATH; RISING FROM 30.8% TO 50.4% IN READING FROM 50.8% TO 56.4% IN MATH.

WE ARE ALSO MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION ON NATIONAL BENCHMARKS.

- ✓ DCPS IS ONE OF 11 DISTRICTS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS (NAEP) TRIAL URBAN DISTRICT ASSESSMENT (TUDA).
- ✓ AS ILLUSTRATED IN THE COUNCIL OF GREAT CITY SCHOOLS RECENT REPORT, “BEATING THE ODDS,” WE HAVE REDUCED THE GAP BETWEEN STUDENTS PERFORMING BELOW BASIC AND PROFICIENT ON THE NAEP: THE PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS SCORING BELOW BASIC DECREASED NINE PERCENT AND THE PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS SCORING PROFICIENT INCREASED BY 3 PERCENT.

WE CONTINUE TO MAKE PROGRESS IN OUR ABILITY TO PREPARE STUDENTS FOR POSTSECONDARY EXPERIENCES.

- ✓ THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS TAKING ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) COURSES HAS INCREASED FROM 818 TO 832. MOREOVER, THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS SCORING 3, 4 OR 5 ON AP EXAMS HAS INCREASED FROM 531 TO 549; WITH A 17 PERCENT INCREASE AMONG MALES ALONE.

✓ IN ADDITION, WE HAVE SEEN A SLIGHT INCREASE IN STUDENT PERFORMANCE ON THE SCHOLASTIC APTITUDE TEST (SAT) WITH AVERAGE VERBAL SCORES INCREASING FROM 412 TO 414 AND MATH FROM 402 TO 404. AND ALL ELIGIBLE 9TH GRADERS AND ALL 10TH AND 11TH GRADERS ARE BEING ENCOURAGED TO TAKE THE PSAT TO BOOST THEIR TEST TAKING EXPERIENCE, SINCE STUDIES CLEARLY SHOW THAT STUDENTS WHO TAKE THE PSAT SCORE HIGHER ON THE SAT.

AS WE MAKE ACADEMIC STRIDES, IN THE PAST YEAR, WE ALSO HAVE BEEN FORTIFYING OUR BUSINESS SYSTEMS. EARLIER THIS MONTH, DCPS BECAME THE FIRST SCHOOL DISTRICT IN THE COUNTRY TO PARTNER WITH A MUNICIPALITY IN OPERATING A STATE OF THE ART PROCUREMENT AUTOMATED SUPPORT SYSTEM (PASS). PASS ALLOWS US TO ORDER SUPPLIES, EQUIPMENT AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS MORE QUICKLY AND MORE EFFICIENTLY AS WELL AS HELPS LEVERAGE OUR BUYING POWER AS A SYSTEM. NEXT, WE WILL BE TACKLING OUR HUMAN RESOURCES AND PAYROLL SYSTEMS TO ENSURE THAT THEY, TOO, EFFECTIVELY SUPPORT THE WORK WE HAVE AHEAD. WE ARE MINDFUL OF THE NEED TO HAVE AN EFFICIENT BUSINESS SYSTEM,

GIVEN THE FISCAL REALITIES THAT EXIST. BECAUSE OF THOSE FISCAL REALITIES, WE WELCOME EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS.

THE NEWEST PARTNERSHIP, INITIATED WITH THE WORLD BANK, WILL ALLOW US TO RECRUIT 100 TEACHERS A YEAR FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS TO GAIN NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION TO FORTIFY THE QUALITY OF TEACHING IN OUR CLASSROOMS.

A PARTNERSHIP WITH THE DC SUPERIOR COURT AND THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR, WE HAVE ACHIEVED SOME SUCCESS IN OUR EFFORTS TO REDUCE TRUANCY IN MIDDLE AND JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS. A NEW PROGRAM AT GARNET-PATTERSON MS IS DESIGNED TO NOT ONLY AGGRESSIVELY ADDRESS ABSENTEEISM BUT TO ALSO DEAL WITH THE UNDERLYING FAMILY CAUSES THAT OFTEN LEAD TO TRUANCY. IN JANUARY, THE PROGRAM GRADUATED ITS FIRST CLASS OF STUDENTS AND PARENTS .

I HAVE MENTIONED THE PARTNERSHIP THAT RESULTED IN PASS. WE ARE EXPECTING SIMILAR PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE OUR HUMAN RESOURCES, BUDGET AND TECHNOLOGY AND INFRASTRUCTURE.

AND AS WE DISCUSS COLLABORATIONS, WE ARE KEENLY AWARE OF THE POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES WITH

FEDERAL AGENCIES THAT CAN BE REALIZED WITH YOUR SUPPORT.

IT WOULD BE VERY HELPFUL, AS WE DEVELOP OUR THEMES FOR HIGH SCHOOLS, TO HAVE A DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY OR AN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, FOR EXAMPLE, WORK WITH US TO ENHANCE CLASSROOM OFFERINGS OR OFFER INTERNSHIPS TO STUDENTS IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE PROGRAM. WE WOULD LIKE TO START A DIALOGUE ON HOW THIS MIGHT WORK.

USING THE MAY 2005 DECLARATION OF EDUCATION AS THE FRAMEWORK FOR EDUCATION REFORM, WE HAVE SINCE DEVELOPED THE MASTER EDUCATION PLAN, WHICH:

- HAS A SYSTEMIC APPROACH FOR RAISING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT OVERALL AND REDUCING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP BETWEEN STUDENT GROUPS.
- WAS DEVELOPED BY COLLABORATION WITH THE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY.
- IN CONTRAST TO PREVIOUS REFORM PROPOSALS, WHICH FOCUSED ON SINGLE PROGRAMS OR SCHOOLS,

STRIKES A SYSTEMWIDE APPROACH THAT PROVIDES SUPPORTS

THE MASTER EDUCATION PLAN SETS A CONTEXT AND DIRECTION FOR OUR LONG RANGE FACILITIES MASTER PLAN WILL BE RELEASED IN MAY AND WILL REFLECT THE BOARD AND ADMINISTRATION'S COMMITMENT TO RIGHT SIZE OUR FACILITIES AND MAXIMIZE THEIR USE THROUGH COLOCATIONS WITH COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS, CITY AGENCIES AND PUBLIC-PUBLIC PARTNERSHIPS AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS.

INDEED, WE ARE MAKING SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS, ACADEMICALLY AND ORGANIZATIONALLY. HOWEVER, THIS WORK HAS NOT BEEN AND CANNOT BE DONE ALONE. WE HAVE BEEN FORTUNATE IN THE SUPPORT WE HAVE RECEIVED FROM THE MAYOR AND THE CITY COUNCIL. WE HAVE ALSO ENJOYED SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT FROM OUR PARENTS, COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND STAKEHOLDERS.

WE HAVE ALSO DEVELOPED A UNIQUE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA INSPECTOR GENERAL TO ASSIST US IN QUICK RESOLUTIONS TO AUDIT ISSUES. IN THE PAST YEAR WE HAVE RESOLVED 17 OF 30 RECOMMENDATIONS AND

CONTINUE TO WORK TOWARD RESOLVING THE REMAINING RECOMMENDATIONS.

WE LOOK TO YOUR THOUGHTFUL CONSIDERATION OF HOW THIS COMMITTEE CAN SUPPORT OUR WORK, WHICH IS ANCHORED IN THE COMMITMENT TO CREATE A WORLD CLASS EDUCATION SYSTEM THAT IS REFLECTIVE OF THIS CAPITOL CITY AND THAT RECOGNIZES THE UNTAPPED POTENTIAL OF OUR YOUTH.

SPECIFICALLY, WE LOOK FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF A CHANGE IN THE DCPS FISCAL YEAR TO JULY – JUNE. WHILE WE RECOGNIZE THIS WILL NECESSITATE CHANGES TO THE APPROPRIATIONS CALENDAR AND THAT THERE ARE OTHER OBSTACLES TO IMPLEMENTATION, WE ARE WILLING TO WORK WITH THE CITY LEADERSHIP AND THIS COMMITTEE TO RESOLVE THIS ISSUE. IT IS CRITICAL THAT WE DO NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THE NEED TO HAVE A FISCAL YEAR THAT IS ALIGNED WITH OUR ACADEMIC YEAR.

THE ABILITY TO ADOPT MULTI-YEAR BUDGETING AND TO CARRY FORWARD OUR FINANCIAL CONDITION WILL ALSO BE A SIGNIFICANT RELIEF. THIS WOULD HELP TO ELIMINATE THE FISCALLY IMPRUDENT “USE IT OR LOSE IT MENTALITY” OF MANY OF

OUR SCHOOLS AND STRENGTHEN CAPACITY TO MORE STRATEGICALLY AND PROGRAMMATICALLY PLAN.

AND, WE LOOK TO YOUR SUPPORT OF OUR EFFORTS TO OBTAIN AN INDEPENDENT CFO. ALTHOUGH OUR CURRENT RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CFO HAS BEEN BETTER THAN IT HAS BEEN IN THE PAST, AS A SYSTEM, WE CANNOT AFFORD TO EFFECTIVELY MANAGE BASED ON A GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIP AS OPPOSED TO SOUND ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE. AS A SCHOOL SYSTEM, OUR MISSION IS CLEARLY UNIQUE FROM THAT OF OTHER CITY AGENCIES, AND WE SHOULD NOT BE TREATED AS JUST ANOTHER DISTRICT AGENCY IN THIS OR OTHER REGARDS.

I WOULD NOW LIKE TO TURN MY ATTENTION TO ANOTHER MAJOR RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM. AS YOU ARE AWARE, DCPS SERVES AS BOTH A LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY (LEA) AS WELL AS A STATE EDUCATION AGENCY (SEA). I SHARE MANY OF YOUR CONCERNS ABOUT THE RECENT DESIGNATION OF DCPS AS "HIGH RISK" BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND THE IMPACT THAT SUCH DESIGNATION WILL HAVE ON THE DCPS STATE EDUCATION AGENCY. I AM HOPEFUL THAT THIS

DESIGNATION WILL, IN FACT, BRING ABOUT THE MUCH NEEDED SUPPORT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE THAT IS BEING PROPOSED, AS THE SEA CONTINUES TO ADDRESS SOME OF THE LONG-STANDING CHALLENGES THAT WE HAVE HAD.

OVER THE LAST YEAR, WE HAVE BEGUN TO CRITICALLY EXAMINE OUR STATE FUNCTIONS AND TO MORE CLEARLY SEPARATE THEM THOSE OF THE LEA. FOR EXAMPLE:

- WE SEPARATED OUR FEDERAL GRANTS AND LOCAL GRANT PERSONNEL INTO TWO DISCRETE OFFICES
- WE RECENTLY CONDUCTED A TIME AND EFFORT STUDY WHICH WOULD ALLOW US TO TRACK OUR OTHER STAFF BASED ON THE TIME DEDICATED TO SEA VS LEA RESPONSIBILITIES.
- .THE FY 2007 BUDGET WAS A FIRST STEP IN MORE ACCURATELY SEPARATING OUR STATE AND LOCAL BUDGET BY ORGANIZATIONAL UNITS.
- WE HAVE CREATED A TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO OVERSEE OUR EFFORTS WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW STATE ASSESSMENT AND OTHER AREAS OF ACCOUNTABILITY

- WE ALSO HAVE CREATED A STATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR FEDERAL GRANTS AND WE ARE ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN THE MAYOR'S STATE ADVISORY PANEL FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION.

FURTHERMORE, RECOGNIZING THE CRITICAL NEED TO EFFECTIVELY CARRYING OUT OUR STATE ROLE, I AM CREATING A CABINET-LEVEL POSITION OF DEPUTY CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICER. THAT PERSON WOULD BE DEDICATED 100 PERCENT TO EFFECT THE ACTUAL SEPARATION OF SEA DUTIES, ROLES AND LINES OF RESPONSIBILITIES FROM THOSE OF THE LEA.

AS WE PREPARE TO REWRITE OUR BOARD POLICIES, WE LOOK TO GUIDANCE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ON MODELS AND BEST PRACTICES FOR STATE RULES AND REGULATIONS. INDEED, WE HOPE THAT WE CAN CREATE A COOPERATIVE AND PRODUCTIVE RELATIONSHIP THAT WILL ENSURE THE BEST SERVICES FOR OUR YOUTH.

I APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY TO COME BEFORE YOU TODAY AND TO TALK ABOUT DC PUBLIC SCHOOLS, WHERE WE ARE, WHERE WE NEED TO BE, AND HOW WE WILL GET TO WHERE WE NEED TO BE IN ORDER TO PROVIDE THE KIND OF EDUCATION STUDENTS IN OUR NATION'S CAPITAL DESERVE.

THIS CONCLUDES MY TESTIMONY. I WILL NOW ANSWER ANY
QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE.